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To: 'microsoft.atr(a)usdoj.gov'
Date: 1/23/02 10:18am
Subject: concern with the current motion of the suit

Good day,

First let me point out that these comments are, of course, in no way an official representation of Department of the Air Force doctrine or opinion. With the frequent travel involved in my career, this is the first time I've had internet access and time to write about my thoughts.

Every time I've read recent comments about the DOJ's case against MicroSoft I've been disheartened. Most of what I have to say, I hope, will be said by others with better experience in the law and more concern for economics.

My experience with Microsoft has led me to believe that Microsoft employees are highly intelligent, extremely motivated and very foresighted. They design a decent product, but the company itself has become so overpowering that it is hurting the US and her technological development.

One example of their malfeasance is their listing of the Dynamic Linked Libraries required for internet connections in their list of files to be removed when uninstalling Internet Explorer. I was very dismayed when the whole system that I wrote, while trying to use only Java to keep the software platform independent, broke simply because I removed Internet Explorer at the request of my Security Officer. Developing code for a client/server project that was to be independent of Operating System, and which I tried to steer clear of OS specific calls, you can imagine my frustration. On the other hand, it was a brilliant business move.

We all know the effects that Microsoft had on Netscape and Corel's WordPerfect. Still among the die-hard researchers that I work with at various institutions from MIT to Sandia, most have a copy of Word-Perfect that we use for serious correspondence (using LaTeX for photographic ready work), only using a copy of MS Word to read the documents that are sent out by various agencies. I wish that all of them had time to share their feeling on the innovation stifled by the Microsoft corporation.

A second example I have is of a friend doing what I thought to be quality speech recognition research. MS approached him to back his research, with the condition that he couldn't publish without their approval. Though it would have been interesting to speak with a lawyer about their offer; that offer was immediately untenable.

I apologize that I did not have time to argue more cogently, but my life is kept quite busy these days. My summary is that I have seen MS move to stifle competition in a way that I hope to practice as a member of the military against those who would stand against my country. However, I can't imagine that such use of force is fair or just in the world of business. We keep America safe because it allows those with new ideas to grow. I've heard of a few problems that hurts those I work with:

A simulator that veers uncontrollably because MS NT crashes
the idea to hand Marine's Windows CE forward fire control units that have frequent fatal execution faults when interfacing with the man-pack radios, because MS wouldn't provide the code for their OS and the current DoD mandate is to use as much commercial off the shelf software as possible

I believe that our country have been held back by the practices of MS. The technology that I've seen as

a member of the Air Force Research Laboratory has some amazing applications, but most of those that run on MS are effete in some way because of their OS. Other OS's have a plethora of capabilities, but since the procurement process dictates using COTS and "Current civilian practices," we have weakened our defense. That's why we have the DOJ and it's anti-trust division. I wish you the best in your arduous task. In my opinion, MS needs to be reined in. Less of a monopoly on software would make a market that had more innovation and I see benefit in that because it helps me do my job.

Thank you for your time,

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